United Nations E/CN.17/2001/14

Economic and Social Council

Distr.: General
15 March 2001

Original: English

Commission on Sustainable Development
Ninth session
16-27 April 2001
Item 6 of the provisional agenda*
Cross-sectoral theme: information for decision-making and participation

National reporting to the Commission on Sustainable Development

Report of the Secretary-General

1. Activities related to national reporting since the seventh session of the Commission on Sustainable Development have focused on the following elements: (a) facilitating national reporting to the ninth session of the Commission; (b) preparation of reporting guidelines for the ninth session of the Commission; (c) preparation of an analytical report of the Secretary-General (E/CN.17/2001/12) entitled "Sustainable production, distribution and use of energy: trends in national implementation", based on national reports, as well as preparation of background documents; (d) preparations of country profiles for the 10-year review of progress achieved in the implementation of the outcome of the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development to be held in 2002; (e) updating and maintenance of the United Nations system-wide sustainable development web site; (f) soliciting views and proposals from national focal points on how to improve future reporting guidelines to the Commission beyond 2002; and (g) development of an interactive database on national information to facilitate and maximize the use of national reporting after 2002.

National reporting to the Commission at its ninth session

2. The Programme for the Further Implementation of Agenda 21 (General Assembly resolution S-19/2, annex), states, in paragraph 115, that national reports on the implementation of Agenda 21[1] have proved to be a valuable means of sharing information at the international and regional levels and, even more important, of providing a focus for the coordination of issues related to sustainable development at the national level within individual countries and, accordingly, in paragraph 133 (b), that national reporting should continue through voluntary national communications or reports.

3. Consistent with the agenda established in the Commission's multi-year programme of work, guidelines for national reporting were prepared by the Secretariat, in consultation with task managers, on the following issues: (a) energy and energy-related aspects of atmosphere and transport; (b) transport; (c) atmosphere; (d) information for decision-making; and (e) international cooperation. The guidelines were sent simultaneously in English, French and Spanish, by mail and where possible by electronic mail, to the

* E/CN.17/2001/1.

01-29039 (E) 200301

respective permanent representatives to the United Nations in New York and to the focal points of all countries at the end of May 1999. The deadline requested was 31 October 2000.

4. By mid-March 2001, reports had been received from the following 45 countries: Antigua and Barbuda, Austria, Belgium, Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Canada, Colombia, Croatia, Cuba, Czech Republic, Denmark, Finland, France, Gambia, Ghana, Greece, Honduras, Iceland, Indonesia, Islamic Republic of Iran, Israel, Japan, Kazakhstan, Lebanon, Lithuania, Malta, Mexico, New Zealand, Nicaragua, Norway, Republic of Korea, Republic of Moldova, Romania, Russian Federation, Sao Tome and Principe, Senegal, Slovakia, Switzerland, Thailand, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Togo, Tonga, Tunisia, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland and Uzbekistan.

Analytical report on sustainable production, distribution and use of energy: trends in national implementation

5. In its decisions 7/5 of 30 April 1999,[2] and 6/5 of 1 May 1998,[3] the Commission on Sustainable Development stressed the importance of continuing to take full advantage of the information provided by Governments to the Commission, on a voluntary basis, especially in view of the comprehensive review of the implementation of Agenda 21 to take place in 2002. The Commission emphasized the need to draw more fully on the information contained in those national reports or on relevant information submitted to the Commission, and requested the Secretariat to process and compile, on a sectoral basis, the information provided by Governments in accordance with the issues contained in the Commission's multi-year programme of work.

6. Consequently, the report of the Secretary-General entitled "Sustainable production, distribution and use of energy: trends in national implementation" (E/CN.17/2001/12) provides an overview of regional trends and progress based on the information that Governments provided in their national reports to the Commission between 1997 and by mid-March 2001. The report analyses a total of 79 national reports on energy.

7. The report consists of four parts: an overall assessment of the progress made towards sustainable production, distribution and use of energy by region; a review of national implementation and regional trends; a summary of findings from the national information; and future challenges for sustainable energy.

United Nations system-wide sustainable development web site

8. As reported at earlier sessions, the United Nations system-wide sustainable development web site (at *http://www.un.org/esa/agenda21/natlinfo*) contains the information provided by Governments in their national reports to the Commission on Sustainable Development, on a country-by-country and issue-by-issue basis. The Secretariat continues to update the web site with new information as Governments submit it.

Preparations for the World Summit on Sustainable Development, South Africa, 2002

Preparations of country profiles

9. As mandated in Commission on Sustainable Development decision 7/5, paragraph 2 (g), the Secretariat is in the process of preparing 122 country profiles on the basis of the latest information submitted by Governments to the Commission on the respective chapter/issue of Agenda 21. These country profiles will complement those presented during the five-year review held by the Assembly at its nineteenth special session in 1997, for submission to the Assembly for the comprehensive review of the implementation of Agenda 21 to be held in 2002. The country profiles will be sent to Governments during the first semester of 2001.

10. The following 122 countries will be receiving draft country profiles: Albania, Algeria, Antigua and Barbuda, Argentina, Armenia, Australia, Austria, Bahamas, Bahrain, Bangladesh, Barbados, Belarus, Belgium, Benin, Bolivia, Botswana, Brazil, Brunei Darussalam, Bulgaria, Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Canada, Chile, China, Colombia, Costa Rica, Côte d'Ivoire, Croatia, Cuba, Czech Republic, Denmark, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Egypt, El Salvador, Estonia, Fiji, Finland, France, Gambia, Georgia, Germany, Ghana, Greece, Guinea-Bissau, Guyana,

Haiti, Honduras, Hungary, Iceland, India, Indonesia, Iran (Islamic Republic of), Iraq, Ireland, Israel, Italy, Jamaica, Japan, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Lebanon, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Madagascar, Malawi, Malaysia, Maldives, Mauritius, Mexico, Monaco, Mongolia, Morocco, Myanmar, Nepal, Netherlands, New Zealand, Nicaragua, Niger, Nigeria, Norway, Pakistan, Panama, Paraguay, Philippines, Poland, Portugal, Qatar, Republic of Korea, Republic of Moldova, Romania, Russian Federation, Sao Tome and Principe, Saudi Arabia, Senegal, Singapore, Slovakia, Slovenia, South Africa, Spain, Sri Lanka, Suriname, Swaziland, Sweden, Switzerland, Syrian Arab Republic, Thailand, the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Togo, Tunisia, Turkey, Uganda, Ukraine, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, United Republic of Tanzania, United States of America, Uruguay, Uzbekistan, Venezuela, Viet Nam, Yugoslavia and Zimbabwe.

11. In August 2000, the National Information Analysis Unit of the Division for Sustainable Development sent to the 68 countries listed below, which would be participating for the first time in the work of the Commission, the format for the country profile. The format should assist Governments in the preparation of their national country profile. The format covers each chapter/issue of Agenda 21. The deadline requested for the submission of the national country profile was set for 30 March 2001. Those countries are: Afghanistan, Andorra, Angola, Azerbaijan, Belize, Bhutan, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Burundi, Cambodia, Cape Verde, Central African Republic, Chad, Comoros, Congo, Cyprus, Democratic People's Republic of Korea, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Djibouti, Dominica, Equatorial Guinea, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Gabon, Grenada, Guatemala, Guinea, Jordan, Kenya, Kiribati, Kuwait, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Latvia, Lesotho, Liberia, Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, Liechtenstein, Mali, Malta, Marshall Islands, Mauritania, Micronesia (Federated States of), Mozambique, Namibia, Nauru, Oman, Palau, Papua New Guinea, Peru, Rwanda, Saint Kitts and Nevis, Saint Lucia, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Samoa, San Marino, Seychelles, Sierra Leone, Solomon Islands, Somalia, Sudan, Tajikistan, Tonga, Trinidad and Tobago, Turkmenistan, Tuvalu, United Arab Emirates, Vanuatu, Yemen and Zambia.

12. To date, 122 countries have reported to the Commission on Sustainable Development and there has been an increasing interest in this information. In view of the great number of country profiles that would have to be finalized and be ready by 2002, it would be appreciated if the finalized versions were received back from the Governments according to the deadlines specified in the respective correspondence.

Interactive database on national information

13. An interactive database on national information is being developed to facilitate submission of national reports to future sessions of the Commission on Sustainable Development as well as to optimize the use of national reports and therefore the exchange of national information. The development of this database will transform the current sustainable development web site into a more interactive information tool once it is completed and activated through the Web. The database should eventually allow information search by worldwide users as well as direct data entries by national focal points, which annually submit national reports on the implementation of Agenda 21 to the Commission.

Improving future reporting to the Commission on Sustainable Development

14. As mandated in Commission on Sustainable Development decision 7/5, paragraph 2 (f), the Secretariat is collecting views from member States on how to improve the guidelines for the elaboration of national reports submitted to the Commission beyond 2002.

15. The Division for Sustainable Development of the United Nations Secretariat is planning to hold a meeting among active national focal points during the course of 2001 to discuss ways and means of improving future reporting to the Commission on Sustainable Development.

16. The National Information Analysis Unit stands ready to assist in the national reporting process leading to the World Summit on Sustainable Development in 2002. For further information, either Mrs. Hiroko Morita-Lou at (212) 963-8813 or Ms. Maria Mercedes Sanchez at (212) 963-9421 should be contacted.

Notes

[1] *Report of the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development, Rio de Janeiro, 3-14 June 1992*, vol. I, *Resolutions Adopted by the Conference* (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.93.I.8 and corrigendum), resolution 1, annex II.

[2] See *Official Records of the Economic and Social Council, 1999, Supplement No. 9* (E/1999/29), chap. I, sect. C.

[3] Ibid., *1998, Supplement No. 9* (E/1998/29), chap. I, sect. B.